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NEW YORK

City completes probe of teacher in 'slavery' controversy

By BEN CHAPMAN | NEW YORK DAILY NEWS | AUG 11, 2018 | 1:55 PM



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Bronx Middle School 118 social studies teacher Patricia Cummings has been reassigned to the rubber room. (Andrew Savulich / New York Daily / New York Daily News)

City Education Department officials have finished their probe of a teacher who grabbed headlines and sparked protests after she was accused of stepping on a student during a lesson on slavery in January.

But though the investigation is over, it may be weeks or months before the department releases the outcome of its investigation of Bronx Middle School 118 teacher Patricia Cummings.

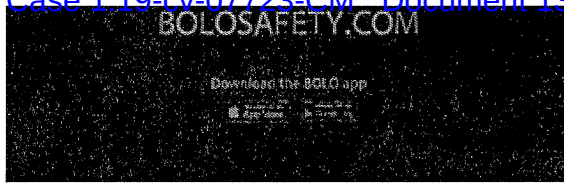
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She was accused of singling out black students during a lesson on the Middle Passage by telling them to lie on the floor and then stepping on their backs to show them what bondage felt like.

Education Department spokesman Douglas Cohen said the city would provide an update on the findings in Cummings' case when the matter is resolved this fall.

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"We release the findings of an investigation when the matter is resolved," Cohen said. "We cannot complete this process for teachers when they're not working over the summer."

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Until the case is resolved, the department won't say how Cummings might be disciplined — or even if she's guilty of the allegations.

Community advocates praised the Education Department for completing the Cummings probe but called for greater transparency in the findings of the investigation.

"This is a step in the right direction; however, we need full transparency," said the Rev. Kevin McCall, the National Action Network's crisis director. "We will be meeting with the chancellor this week, to demand that all findings of the investigation be made public immediately."

Cummings, 37, a social studies teacher who has worked in city schools since

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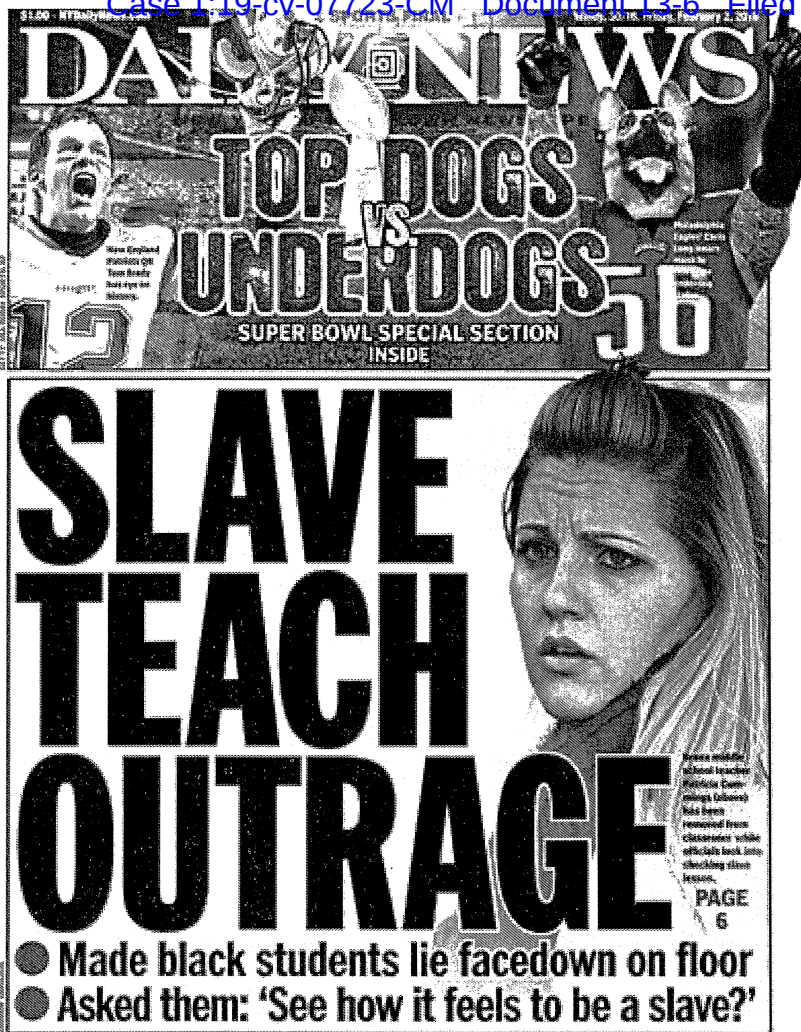
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by Taboola

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How The News covered the story. (New York Daily News)

2006 and earns \$68,934, didn't respond to a request for comment.

She was assigned to the rubber room after the allegations against her went public. Cummings remains on the city payroll while the case is resolved.

Hers was one of two cases that were part of a series of Daily News stories on accusations of racism in schools that ignited protests around the city, prompting Mayor de Blasio to set aside \$23 million for anti-bias training for city educators in April.

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In the other case, a city probe of Bronx Middle School 224 Principal Patricia Catania remains active while investigators parse allegations that she barred Black History Month lessons and confiscated a student-made poster celebrating the trailblazing African-American singer and actress Lena Horne.

Catania, 49, a 26-year veteran of city schools who has an otherwise clean disciplinary record and earns \$154,257 a year, remains on the job and also didn't respond to a request for comment.

McCall called on the city to conclude its probe of Catania as it has for

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Topics: Educators

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Ben Chapman is an award-winning reporter who covers education for the New York Daily News. A graduate of Columbia University's Graduate School of Journalism, Chapman has written more than 2,000 articles about New York City schools for the Daily News since joining the paper in 2009.

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